



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 8, Number 1, February 2022

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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GCD UPDATE

by Claudia Browner

Welcome to the February issue of the Governor's Council on Disability's (GCD) newsletter. Since the beginning of the year, our team has been gearing up for a number of GCD programs including the annual Inclusion and Youth Leadership Awards, the Legislative Education Project and Legislative Update, the Virtual Leadership Summit and the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum. You can find details about these programs in this issue.

Our team was excited to learn that this year, many of Missouri's disability-related organizations and agencies are going to offer their programs and conferences in person again. While virtual events and programs are very beneficial and have improved so much over the last two years, in-person events still provide more opportunities for networking and building professional and personal connections. On page 4 of the newsletter, you can find a listing of some of the upcoming events hosted throughout the State of Missouri in the coming months. The GCD staff is excited about participating and/or collaborating in planning and promoting these events with our partnering agencies.

Another exciting announcement is the upcoming launch of the new Disability Web Portal, GCD Website, and GCD logo. Over the last few months, our team has been working with the Office of Administration's IT division to update the look of these websites and make them more user-friendly. Stay tuned for more information and a fresh look to come in the next few weeks!

DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGISLATIVE DAY 2022

by Claudia Browner

The date for the 2022 Disability Rights Legislative Day (DRLD) has been set—mark your calendars now for Wednesday, March 9th. In its 21st year, this important advocacy event will once again be held in person at the Missouri State Capitol, in the first floor rotunda, with a virtual option for those who choose not to travel to Jefferson City.

Interested individuals and organizations are invited to participate and hear from a variety of speakers about legislative topics important to the disability community and meet with legislators.



**THERE IS
POWER
IN THE
UNITY OF
HUMANITY**

MARCH 9, 2022 | MISSOURI DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGISLATIVE DAY | DRLD.ORG



To find out more details about the event, get answers to frequently asked questions, and register, please visit the DRLD website at drlld.org

You can follow the DRLD Facebook page for updates about the event at facebook.com/drlld_missouri

LEGISLATIVE INVOLVEMENT FROM HOME

by Laura Mueth

The 2022 legislative session is now underway. The General Assembly is in the Capitol and has been working on re-drawing the U.S. Congressional districts for Missouri as well as state budget issues and bills. They have also been filing and moving bills on a variety of topics impacting Missouri citizens.

If you are wanting to be involved but do not want to go to the Capitol, the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has a way you can track disability related legislation and/or learn more about what goes on at the Capitol and various aspects of legislative advocacy from home. Through our Legislative Update and Legislative Education Project (LEP) you can do both these endeavors. You can find all disability related bills and their weekly status courtesy of the 2022 Legislative Updates on the [Legislative Updates](#) web page.

On the [LEP](#) page you will find videos and recorded modules which cover:

- Your Elected Officials and General Assembly
- Understanding How a Bill Becomes a Law
- Building Effective Relationships With Legislators
- Testifying at a House or Senate Hearing
- Navigating the House and Senate Websites

The videos have closed captioning and a separate audio description version for those who need those features.



If you have questions after watching, please contact me and I will answer them or provide additional guidance/suggestions. To schedule a time to ask these for yourself or a group, please contact me to request a **Virtual Q&A Session** at Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov.

In addition, you will find a publication titled [Tips for meeting with your legislators](#) to prepare you for a visit with your elected officials, either in person or virtually.

TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED MISSOURIANS

by Chip Hailey, GCD Council Member

Designed to bring blind and visually Missourians 55 years of age and over into the world of computers, the Technology Association for Visually Impaired Missourians (TAVIM) offers refurbished computers, adaptive software, and training, at no cost to qualified applicants.

For more information visit: tavi-mo.org or contact Chip Hailey at 417-540-9703 or e-mail: chiphailey52@gmail.com

COVID—19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

COVID-19 Free Testing Information—<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/community-test.php>

COVID-19 Vaccine Information—<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov>

COVID-19 Information Hotline—Call 877-435-8411

Need Transportation to get the vaccine? Get a Ride Resources—<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov/ride/>

Disability Web Portal—COVID-19 Resources page—<https://disability.mo.gov/covid-19.htm>

Information about free In-Home Test Kits—<https://www.covidtests.gov/> or call 1-800-232-0233

UPDATE ON THE 2022 MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

by Rachel Rackers

Kelsey Tainsh, a nationally recognized speaker, is this year's keynote speaker for the [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) and is scheduled to speak to the delegates and alumni on Tuesday, July 12th. Kelsey's story is inspiring and encourages others to achieve their goals, no matter what obstacles they may face. We look forward to having Kelsey kick off our week that will be filled with various activities and opportunities for growth!



As a reminder, the dates for 2022 MO-YLF are July 12-16th and the event is held at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO. While at MO-YLF, the delegates will gain leadership skills, knowledge, self-confidence, and much more.

During the week, delegates will learn a lot of valuable information. Some activities the delegates participate in include a community service project, a visit to the State Capitol, an employment event focusing on career exploration, mock interview exercises, networking, and tips on when and how to disclose disability status, information on volunteer opportunities, and a resource fair. Throughout the week they will also engage in fun social events including adaptive sports night, a talent show, and a dance. At the end of the week, the teams have a chance to present their experiences and what they learned to family members, staff and sponsors at the closing banquet. Also on the last day, there's a resource fair and parent information session.

Applications for delegates and volunteer staff are now being accepted and available on our website at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm>. The deadline for delegate applications is April 15, 2022.

If you know of a student with disabilities who has leadership potential, please share the information about this exciting program with them. GCD is looking for applicants from all areas of the state. MO-YLF is free to the students who are selected. This is all made possible because of donations and sponsorships.

For questions, please contact the Governor's Council on Disability at (800) 877-8249 or (573) 751-2600.

GCD is preparing for its 2nd Virtual Leadership Summit



The planning committee is getting geared up for the 2nd Annual [Virtual Leadership Summit](#) (VLS) to be held virtually on February 26, 2022. GCD staff along with multiple partnering organizations have been busy planning over the past year.

Participants will meet virtually with leaders in the disability community and hear from employers, mentors, alumni, and keynote speakers about the importance of goal setting, self-advocacy, and leadership.

Our team is looking forward to connecting with youth throughout the different parts of the state. During the Virtual Leadership Summit, the youth will get a small glimpse into what the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is and also build connections with other youth, alumni, agencies, employers, etc.

The application deadline for this year's Virtual Leadership Summit has already passed. Be sure to watch for announcements and the application this fall for the 2023 event.

For more information on the Virtual Leadership Summit please visit our website at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm>

For updates information on both the MO-YLF and VLS, you can also follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MOLeadershipForum>

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Council Members

- Ronald Hack, Interim Chair, St. Louis
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D., Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Wayne Crawford, Marshall
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
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- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Kim Lackey, St. Louis
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
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- Lesia Shelton, Buffalo
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- Laura Mueth, Senior Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Senior Program Specialist
- Jessica Zimmer, Lead Administrative Support Assistant

BICENTENNIAL BRIDGE OPENS IN JEFFERSON CITY

by Claudia Browner

Next time you plan a trip to Jefferson City, be sure to allow some extra time to check out the new Bicentennial Bridge that opened in December.

This newest tourist attraction is an accessible bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists that leads you from the north side of the capitol grounds across the railroad tracks and down to a new park by the Missouri River, called Deborah Cooper Park. The park features paved walking trails located on the southern bank of the river on a piece of land called Adrian's Island. An additional forest loop trail (unpaved) leads you east along the railroad tracks and the river. Park benches, a pavilion and outdoor games/activities are planned in the near future.



This new park offers stunning views of the Missouri River, the Missouri River Bridge, the Governor's Mansion and the state capitol.

For additional information, please visit <https://www.jcparks.com/park/deborah-cooper-park/>

Photo:

View of the Bicentennial Bridge and Missouri River Bridge from Deborah Cooper Park

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **2022 Virtual Technology Summit—February 3, 17, and 24**
<https://dmh.mo.gov/dev-disabilities/technology-first/2022-virtual-summit>
- **Disability Rights Legislative Day—March 9—State Capitol, Jefferson City**
<https://drlld.org>
- **Power Up Assistive Technology Conference —April 4-5, Blue Springs**
<https://at.mo.gov/power-up-conference/>
- **Independent Living (IL) Summit—May 22-24, Branson**
<https://mocil.org>
- **Youth Programs for transition age high school students with disabilities**
 - February 26—[Virtual Leadership Summit](#)
 - June/July—[Center for Independent Living \(CIL\) summer experience](#)
 - June/July—[Starkloff Disability Institute \(SDI\) Dream Big Camp, St. Louis](#)
 - June/July—[VR Summer Work Experience Programs](#)
 - July 12-16—[Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#)

If you know of other events you would like us to share with the disability community, please contact our office.



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 8, Number 2, April 2022

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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AWARDING LEADERS IN INCLUSION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

by Claudia Browner

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) is excited to announce this year's winners of the Inclusion and Youth Leadership Awards. Awarding leaders in inclusion and youth leadership recognizes and honors their accomplishments and brings awareness to the importance of inclusion and advocacy.

The Inclusion Award and one Honorable Mention are presented annually to recognize private and public employers, individuals, and organizations that have successfully included people with disabilities in education, employment, housing, leisure activities, universal design and website accessibility.

The 2021 Inclusion Award winner is Summit Future Foundation, Kansas City and the Honorable Mention goes to Chill-Pak, Springfield.



For more information on the 30th annual Inclusion Award winners, visit <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm>

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GCD LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITES AND LOGO

by Claudia Browner



The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has recently launched the new [Disability Web Portal](#), [GCD Website](#), and logo. We hope you will find these websites to be user-friendly and easy to navigate for all users.

On the home page of the Disability Web Portal, you will find an introductory video explaining the content and services provided. The portal also features a Resource Directory for Missourians with disabilities. To add your organization or agency to the Resource Directory or to update your listing, visit https://disability.mo.gov/resource_search.

You can check out the new websites here:

Disability Web Portal – <https://disability.mo.gov>

Governor's Council on Disability – <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd>

Please feel free to contact the GCD with comments or questions at gcd@oa.mo.gov or 573-751-2600.

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO USE WHEELCHAIRS

by Laura Mueth

Through the years, the GCD has heard from Missouri citizens that travel is often difficult for individuals who use wheelchairs. Two of those reasons are a lack of airplane accessibility and a lack of funds. As people are beginning to make summer vacation plans, there have been two travel related developments for those who utilize wheelchairs.

On March 24, the United States Department of Transportation held a public meeting regarding air travel by persons who use wheelchairs. The meeting was an opportunity for the Department to hear from individuals who use wheelchairs regarding their experiences while flying and from the airline industry. The airline industry spoke about the challenges they face dealing with wheelchairs as well as the steps being taken to improve situations. Individuals shared poor experiences with handling of wheelchairs, staff training, aisle chairs, and airplane lavatories (restrooms).

To assist in addressing issues with the lavatories the Department has a [proposed rule](#) related to accessible lavatories on single aisle aircrafts open for public comment until April 25. Instructions for comment submission are included within the proposed rule. Visit the website at <https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/accessible-lavatories-single-aisle-aircraft-part-2> for more information.

[The Curb Free Foundation](#) launched in February to provide grants to individuals who use wheelchairs and do not have the funds to take their dream domestic or international trip. Application details can be found on the website at <https://thecurbfreefoundation.com> or on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/thecurbfreefoundation>.

Hopefully, these developments provide opportunities for Missourians who utilize wheelchairs to have enjoyable travel experiences in the coming years and also serve as a way for others to visit our state.



COVID—19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

NEW Long COVID-19 Information—<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov/longhaul/>

COVID-19 Free Testing Information—<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/community-test.php>

COVID-19 Vaccine Information—<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov>

COVID-19 Information Hotline—Call 877-435-8411

Need Transportation to get the vaccine? Get a Ride Resources—<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov/ride/>

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YOUTH PARTICIPATE IN 2ND VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

by Rachel Rackers

The Governor's Council on Disability has hosted its second annual [Virtual Leadership Summit](#). On Saturday, February 26th, sixteen high school students who represented nine different Missouri counties, met virtually to learn about career development, leadership, goal setting, self-determination, self-advocacy, independent living, and more.

To kick off the event, participants heard from keynote speaker, Wesley Hamilton about the importance of setting goals and staying positive despite barriers you face in life. They also learned a lot of valuable information from five of our Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) alumni and Vocational Rehabilitation about employment and college. The alumni shared their personal experiences in both and provided great tips and tools for self-advocacy and leadership. They also spoke about the importance of mentors, asking for accommodations, utilizing the disability services on campus, and how the MO-YLF impacted their lives. Participants then learned about self-determination, self-advocacy and independent living during a session facilitated by Jill McClintock.

A special thank you goes to Paraquad, MU Pre-Employment Transition Services, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for their involvement in the planning and staffing of the event. Also, thank you to the many panelists and MO-YLF alumni that participated in the second Virtual Leadership Summit.

MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM TO BE HELD IN JULY

by Rachel Rackers



The Governor's Council on Disability is excited to host the 2022 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) this year from July 12th-16th, after a two-year break due to the pandemic.

Applications for delegates and volunteer staff are still being accepted and available on our website at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm>.

The deadline for applications is **April 15, 2022**.

If you know of a high school student with disabilities who has leadership potential, please share the information about this exciting program with them. GCD is looking for applicants from all areas of the state. MO-YLF is free of cost to the students who are selected. This is all made possible because of funding from state agencies, sponsorships and donations.

If you or your organization would like to help us make this great program possible, please contact GCD for more information by email at gcd@oa.mo.gov or by calling our office at (800) 877-8249 or (573) 751-2600.

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AWARDING LEADERS IN INCLUSION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP



The annual Youth Leadership Award and one Honorable Mention are presented to recognize an outstanding Missouri youth (age 16-26) with a disability that has demonstrated exemplary leadership by making a difference in their community. The 2021 Youth Leadership Award winner is Seyoon Choi and the Honorable Mention goes to TyReeke Garnett, both of St. Louis.

For more information about the 9th annual Youth Leadership Award winners, please visit our website at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm>

Congratulations to all of the winners! The awards were presented to the winners at the Power Up Assistive Technology Conference & Expo in Blue Springs.

The GCD will be accepting nominations for the 2022 Inclusion and Youth Leadership Awards in the fall.

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US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ISSUES GUIDANCE ON WEB ACCESSIBILITY AND THE ADA

by Claudia Browner

On March 18, the US Department of Justice issued a [news release](#) announcing new [Web Accessibility Guidance Under the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA). This new guidance describes which steps state and local governments and businesses open to the public can take to make sure that their websites are accessible to people with disabilities, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Having websites that are inaccessible to individuals with disabilities is no different than a building or program that has access barriers, and prevents these individuals from having equal access to information or services the government entities or businesses provide.



Identified as a priority by the Department of Justice, this new guidance covers the following topics:

- Why Web Accessibility Matters
- Examples of Website Accessibility Barriers
- When the ADA Requires Web Content to be Accessible
- How to Make Web Content Accessible to People with Disabilities
- Web Accessibility for People with Disabilities is a Priority for the Department of Justice
- Resources

To read the news release, go to

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-issues-web-accessibility-guidance-under-americans-disabilities-act>

To access the new guidance on website accessibility, visit

<https://beta.ada.gov/web-guidance/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **MOCIL Advocacy Day—April 12, Missouri State Capitol**
<https://fb.me/e/1OLHP3GN6>
- **Independent Living (IL) Summit—May 22-24, Branson**
<https://mocil.org>
- **Missouri Rehabilitation Association (MRA) Conference—June 5-7, Osage Beach** <https://www.mo-rehab.org/conference.html>
- **DESE—Transition Training Institute—TTI—June 27-29, Columbia**
<https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/2022-transition-training-institute-save-date>
- **Youth Programs for transition age high school students with disabilities**
 - June/July—[Center for Independent Living \(CIL\) summer experience](#)
 - June/July—[Starkloff Disability Institute \(SDI\) Dream Big Camp, St. Louis](#)
 - June/July—[VR Summer Work Experience Programs](#)
 - July 12-16—[Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#)

If you know of other events you would like us to share with the disability community, please contact our office.



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 8, Number 3, June 2022

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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GCD SEEKS ENTRIES FOR DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH POSTER CONTEST

by Claudia Browner

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is observed annually in October to celebrate the contributions of America's workers with disabilities and educate employers and others about the importance of disability-inclusive employment policies and practices.

It is not too early to start planning ahead for NDEAM 2022. From putting up a poster to implementing a disability education program, there are many ways to get involved and support this event.



In preparation for NDEAM, the Governor's Council on Disability is now accepting entries for the annual Disability Employment Awareness Month Poster Contest.

Artists are asked to illustrate what employment inclusion means to individuals with disabilities and spark conversation about the importance of access to employment and inclusion at work. The poster contest is open to all Missouri residents. Please submit your entries by August 15.

More information can be found at <https://disability.mo.gov/PosterContest>

ADA CELEBRATES ITS 32ND ANNIVERSARY

by Claudia Browner

On July 26, 1990, the landmark civil rights legislation known as the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, was signed into law, prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, state and local government services, public accommodations, and telecommunications. The ADA has expanded opportunities and inclusion for people with disabilities by reducing barriers, changing perceptions, and increasing full participation in all aspects of community living.

Each year, the disability community celebrates the anniversary of this important historic milestone by reaffirming the principles of inclusion and equity, and recommitting to work towards full compliance with the ADA. The theme for this year's celebration is **Celebrate—Learn—Share.**

For ideas on how you can participate in celebrating, learning, and sharing about the 32nd ADA Anniversary, please visit the ADA National Network's anniversary website at <https://adaanniversary.org/>



Logo credit: ADA National Network (adata.org)

CONGRESS CONSIDERS REQUIRING DISABILITY SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

by Laura Mueth

The United States House of Representatives recently passed a bill ([HR 2992](#)) which would require that relevant tools be developed to train law enforcement on interactions with individuals who have traumatic brain injury, acquired brain injury, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Missouri is fortunate to already be implementing training which includes this information as well as extensive information on how law enforcement can interact with and best serve all people with disabilities. Missouri is in the sixth and final year of a [Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council](#) grant which has allowed [Niagara University's First Responder Disability Awareness Training Program](#) (FRDAT) to bring their curriculum to Missouri, customize it with Missouri specific information, and train our law enforcement officers.

I have been honored to be a part of the team ensuring the endeavor is successful through serving on the Missouri FRDAT Advisory Council and co-training officers. As we near the conclusion of the grant funding phase, the Advisory Council and the FRDAT staff have been working together to implement structures to continue the training of law enforcement officers in the future, as well as to provide further information and resources to the law enforcement agencies who participate in the training. This remains a work in progress because Missouri is the only state other than New York to complete the grant.

SERVICE OR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL—WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

by Claudia Browner

The Governor's Council on Disability receives many calls and questions from individuals relating to the rights and obligations concerning service and emotional support animals, and oftentimes, they are not sure about the difference.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a service animal as a dog that has been trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, while Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) are not considered service animals under the ADA. Emotional Support Animals have not been trained to perform specific tasks. ESAs may provide comfort, companionship or emotional support to relieve symptoms of a person's disability and can include other animals besides dogs.



The ADA requires state and local government agencies, businesses and non-profit organizations that provide goods or services to the public to make "reasonable modifications" in their policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to accommodate people with disabilities. The service animal rules fall under this general principle. Accordingly, entities that have a "no pets" policy generally must modify the policy to allow service animals into their facilities. Emotional Support Animals do not qualify as service animals under the ADA and therefore do not have to be allowed in public places.

While the ADA does not specifically address service animals in employment, employees with disabilities may request to bring their service dog or emotional support animal to work as a reasonable accommodation.

Rights and regulations are different in regards to housing. The Federal Fair Housing Act defines assistance animals as animals that work, assist, perform tasks, or provide emotional support for the benefit of a person with a disability. This means, that in addition to service dogs, a landlord or homeowners association must consider emotional support animals as a reasonable accommodation in housing.

For comprehensive information, educational videos, legislation, and publications regarding service animals and emotional support animals, please visit the Service Animals page on the Disability Portal at <https://disability.mo.gov/serviceanimals.htm>. You may also contact our office with questions or to request a presentation on this topic.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATE IN MO-YLF 2022

by Rachel Rackers

Twenty-two delegates and numerous staff are getting geared up for the 18th annual [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) for high school students with disabilities to be held at the University of Missouri in Columbia, July 12-16.



Throughout the week, the delegates will be exposed to a variety of helpful information to help them in their transition from high school. One unique event during the week is the mentor luncheon, where successful individuals with disabilities from a variety of different career paths are invited to talk to the delegates and share their experiences. It is an opportunity for delegates to learn first-hand that they can lead productive and full lives. If you are a person with a disability and would like to participate in our mentor event, we would love to have you join us!

You may not know this, but the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is completely funded from sponsorships and in-kind donations. The support from individuals and organizations, is what allows us to offer this life changing program at no cost to the youth or their families. There are several ways that you can support MO-YLF and the youth with disabilities from all over Missouri that attend our 5-day program.

One way is to be sponsor through a monetary donation. We have many different levels of [sponsorships](#), starting at just \$50! A second way to donate and contribute to MO-YLF, is through in-kind donations. Each of our delegates and staff get a welcome backpack with different types of goodies and promotional items. We will have roughly 60 backpacks to fill this year and still need items for them, but need your help to make this possible. Other items that we are needing, include: giveaway/door prizes (gift cards or larger items). Find out more about the sponsorship opportunities at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/files/2022-MO-YLF-Sponsorship-Opportunities.pdf>

A third way to donate and contribute to MO-YLF, is to donate an item off our [wish list](#). Due to the pandemic, we haven't been able to host MO-YLF since 2019. As we plan for this year's event, a lot of our nurse and first aid items have expired and need to be replaced. We have created a list of these items to give more opportunities for individuals and organizations to help support our program and offset some of our expenses. The MO-YLF Wish List can be found at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/files/2022-MO-YLF-Wish-List.pdf>

Every single donation helps us provide this excellent experience for our delegates, whether it be monetary, in-kind, or an item off our wish list.

Lastly, if you are an organization that provides a service or supports high school students with disabilities, we want to invite you to join us for our MO-YLF Resource event on July 16th from 10:00 am to noon at the University of Missouri Campus in Columbia. This is an opportunity to share helpful information and resources with our delegates and their parents/guardians. Our goal is to send them home with a large variety of information that will be helpful and also to the parent/guardian in supporting their youth.

If you would like to support the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum or have questions about donating or participating, please contact Rachel Rackers at rachel.rackers@oa.mo.gov.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- ☑ **Participate as a mentor**
- ☑ **Participate in the resource event**
- ☑ **Donate items**
- ☑ **Provide a sponsorship**

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- Vacant, Lead Administrative Support Assistant

DIGITAL ACCESS IN EDUCATION

by Claudia Browner

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has recently announced a new series of videos covering topics on digital access in education, including how people with disabilities use technology, applicable federal regulations, and identifying and remediating access barriers.

The videos provide valuable information on a wide range of topics to all those in the education field and others who are interested in learning about equal access to education.



You can learn what makes technology accessible for people with disabilities and how you can make your site or platform accessible to all. The video series is broken down into 19 different topics and each video is just a few minutes long.

You can find the videos on the ADA Network's website at

<https://adata.org/ocr-videos>

or on YouTube at

https://youtu.be/Z_eoocwBYb4

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Missouri Rehabilitation Association (MRA) Conference—June 5-7, Osage Beach** <https://www.mo-rehab.org/conference.html>
- **DESE—Transition Training Institute—TTI—June 27-29, Columbia** <https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/2022-transition-training-institute-save-date>
- **Youth Programs for transition age high school students with disabilities**
 - June/July—[Center for Independent Living \(CIL\) summer experience](#)
 - June/July—[Starkloff Disability Institute \(SDI\) Dream Big Camp, St. Louis](#)
 - June/July—[VR Summer Work Experience Programs](#)
 - July 12-16—[Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#)
- **MACDDS Annual Conference—October 5-7, 2022, Columbia** <https://macdds.org/2022-macdds-annual-conference/>

If you know of other events you would like us to share with the disability community, please contact our office.



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 8, Number 4, August 2022

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

GCD UPDATE

by Claudia Browner

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- Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights
- Upcoming Events

On June 28, 2022, Governor Parson appointed Ronald Hack as the Chair of the Governor's Council on Disability. Ron has been a member of the Council since 2009 and has served as the Interim Chair since April 30, 2021. The GCD team and Council congratulate Ron on his appointment.

During the month of July, the Governor's Council on Disability once again hosted the annual [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) for high school students with disabilities, after a two-year break due to the COVID pandemic. The GCD team and its collaborating agencies were excited to offer this 5-day leadership development program to young leaders from Missouri's disability community. Read more about the event on [Page 2](#) of this newsletter.

LAST CALL FOR GCD POSTER CONTEST ENTRIES

The GCD is accepting artwork entries for the [National Disability Employment Awareness Month \(NDEAM\) Poster Contest](#) now through August 15.

Don't miss your opportunity to participate. The winning artwork will be featured in this year's NDEAM Poster to help raise awareness about the importance of workforce inclusion of individuals with disabilities. The contest is open to all Missouri residents. More information and entry forms can be found at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/PosterContest>



NEW NATIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS NUMBER

by Laura Mueth



Did you know receiving behavioral health crisis services is now easier than ever? All any individual needs to do is call or text 988. The [National Suicide Hotline Designation Act](#), which became law in 2020, made 988 the three digit dialing code for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly the National Suicide Prevention Hotline).

As of July 16, calling or texting this number will connect the individual directly to a crisis specialist in Missouri. Veterans can dial 988 and choose option 1 to be connected specifically to the [Veterans Crisis Line](#).

Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing can utilize Missouri Relay or a teletypewriter (TTY) to call 988. Individuals can "chat" with a specialist at the website: [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#). Persons with disabilities do not have to disclose a disability when contacting 988.

Missouri public and charter schools as well as higher education institutions will be providing the Lifeline number to students. As part of [Senate Bill 718](#), which was signed by Governor Parson in June, 988 will be added to the student IDs of any student in grades seven through twelve and those enrolled in higher education institutions beginning July 1, 2023.

2022 MO-YLF TEACHES YOUTH NEW LEADERSHIP SKILLS

by Rachel Rackers



The 2022 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) was a great success. From July 12-16, 2022, 15 delegates representing 11 different counties in Missouri participated in the 18th annual MO-YLF at the University of Missouri in Columbia, where they learned about the importance of self-advocacy, disability culture and history, mentorship, the legislative process, post-secondary transition, independent living and community service.

It is important for students with disabilities to learn skills by example and interactions with others who share similar experiences, which is what MO-YLF provides. The program is designed specifically to help students grow into leaders.

Students were selected to become delegates at the forum based on an application process. In addition to leadership skills, the delegates learned to set life goals, and how to advocate for their needs. Throughout the week, delegates worked to complete their leadership poster, which gave them an opportunity to think about what their vision for a good life would be. Aside from setting goals, it also allows them an opportunity to brainstorm ideas on what steps they need to take in order to achieve those particular goals.



MO-YLF participants and keynote speaker on MU campus

There were many great experiences and events that the delegates were able to partake in throughout the week. During the day, delegates participated in a variety of small and large group learning sessions, followed by fun-filled evening activities. Some of the highlights were the keynote speaker, Kelsey Tainsh, adaptive sports night, a day at the Capitol, a talent show, dance and photo booth. It didn't take very long at all for the delegates to bond and join together to enjoy these activities!



MO-YLF participants and Senator Bernskoetter in the Senate Chamber

One of the highlights of the week was the legislative day in Jefferson City, where delegates engaged in a mock legislative hearing with Representatives Chuck Basye, Raychel Proudie, Cheri Toalson Reisch, Bridget Walsh Moore in the House, and a debate with Senator Mike Bernskoetter in the Senate, facilitated by GCD team member Laura Mueth.

Following the mock bill debate, the MO-YLF participants had the opportunity to view the Governor's Office.

Each year, the delegates participate in a community service project. This year's selected organization was City of Refuge-Columbia, which helps refugees recover and regain control of their lives after having to

overcome the trauma and displacement they have experienced.

With the help from delegates and staff, we were able to collect and donate an overwhelming amount of items!



Donation items collected by MO-YLF participants

(Continued from page 2)

We would like to acknowledge the following sponsors and partnering agencies for the 2022 MO-YLF: Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Edward Jones, Paraquad, MU Pre-Employment Transition Services, Veterans United, Missouri Centers for Independent Living, Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council, as well as several other agencies that provided in-kind donations to support the program.



MO-YLF delegates work on their leadership poster

Congratulations to the 2022 Missouri Youth Leadership Forum delegates who graduated from the program to become alumni! Since the inception of the program in 2001, there have been 359 delegates who have completed the program, and 11 MO-YLF alumni returned this year to serve as facilitators, team members, mentors and panelists and share their experiences.

The planning team will soon start preparing for next year's MO-YLF. Be sure to watch for announcements and the application this fall and help us share the information about this life changing program.

Find out more about the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm>

DO YOU HAVE A PHOTO ID FOR VOTING?

by Laura Mueth

Due to [House Bill 1878](#), beginning with the **November** election, every Missourian wishing to vote will be required to show photo identification (ID). This means a voter must have **one** of the following:

- A nonexpired Missouri driver's license
- A nonexpired or nonexpiring Missouri nondriver's ID
- A photo ID issued by the Missouri National Guard, United States Armed Forces, or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs
- A document that meets specific requirements as written in state statute

Disability organizations throughout the state realize many individuals with disabilities do not have a photo ID. Although this requirement is currently being challenged in court via a lawsuit, we are encouraging individuals who do not have one to begin the process now so you have one ready before November.

Individuals who do not already meet the requirement can do so by obtaining a nondriver ID. The Missouri Department of Revenue (DOR) is the state department that provides this. Their [Documents for Driver License, Nondriver ID, and Instruction Permit web page](#) provides information on the documents needed to obtain one.

After looking at the information, if you have the required documents, go to your local DOR [License Office](#) or call 573-526-8683 to acquire one. DOR will provide one for **free** to those obtaining for the first time in order to vote.



If you do not have a certified birth certificate, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Vital Records can provide a **free** copy of a certified Missouri birth certificate. To request a birth certificate, call (573) 751-6387 or email VitalRecordsInfo@health.mo.gov. If you need to obtain multiple documents, the Missouri Secretary of State's office will assist you in obtaining these. This includes **paying** for any documents needed from another state or the federal government. This service can be requested by completing the [Show It 2 Vote Help Request form](#).

The GCD encourages voters with disabilities who do not have a photo ID to use the coming months to acquire one so their views are able to be expressed in upcoming local, state, and national elections.

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Council Members

- Ronald Hack, Council Chair, St. Louis
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D, Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Wayne Crawford, Marshall
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Kim Lackey, St. Louis
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Traci Ritter, Cape Girardeau
- Andrew Sartorius, Jefferson City
- Lesia Shelton, Buffalo
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Staff Members

- Claudia Browner, Executive Director
- Laura Mueth, Senior Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Senior Program Specialist
- Jennifer Pettit, Lead Administrative Support Assistant

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AIRLINE PASSENGERS WITH DISABILITIES BILL OF RIGHTS

by Claudia Browner

On July 8, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued a press release announcing the publication of the First-Ever Bill of Rights for Airline Passengers with Disabilities.

According to the press release, the [Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights](#) is an easy to use summary of the fundamental rights of air travelers with disabilities under the Air Carrier Access Act, which will empower air travelers with disabilities to understand and assert their rights, and serve to ensure that U.S. and foreign air carriers and their contractors uphold those rights. The document includes a summary of existing laws governing the rights of air travelers with disabilities.



The [Press Release](#) can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/dot-announces-first-ever-bill-rights-passengers-disabilities-calls-airlines-seat>

The full [Bill of Rights](#) is available at <https://www.transportation.gov/disabilitybillofrights>

YouTube video statement: <https://youtu.be/-nOVGhIK1ow>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **August 28-30, 2022**
Real Voices, Real Choices Conference, Osage Beach
<https://www.missourimhf.org/real-voices-real-choices-conference/>
- **September 25-27, 2022**
MO-CASE Special Education Conference, Osage Beach
<https://www.mo-case.org/>
- **September 26, 2022**
Virtual Mobility Summit (Zoom)
Join national and state transportation experts to learn about best practices and frame works to achieve accessible and affordable transportation
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYuf-yurDIjGtTiuZ0doiZeNnWGiYdA_Trh
- **October 5-7, 2022**
MACDDS Annual Conference, Columbia
<https://macdds.org/2022-macdds-annual-conference/>

If you know of other events you would like us to share with the disability community, please contact our office.



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

HONORING NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

by Claudia Browner

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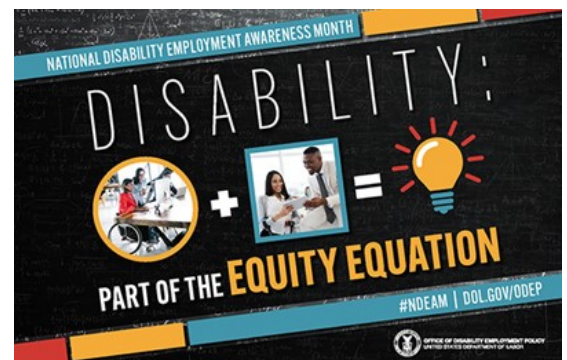
- Web Accessibility Awareness and Training improves overall experience

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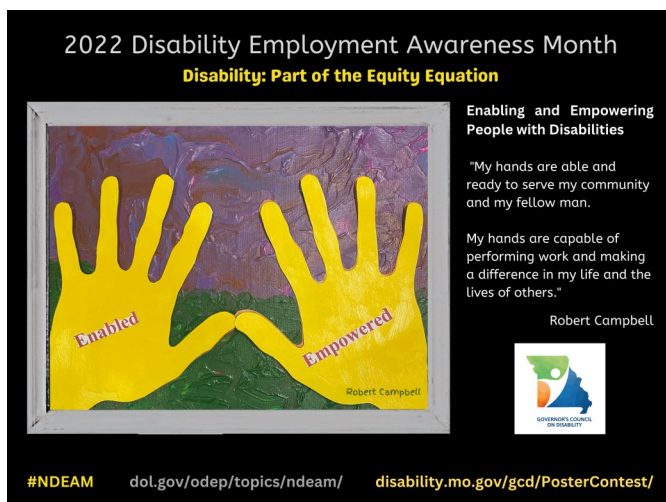
National Disability Employment Awareness Month – NDEAM is celebrated nationwide throughout the month of October to recognize the vital role that people with disabilities play in making the nation's workforce diverse and inclusive.

Initiated by the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment in 1945, NDEAM recognizes the contributions of employees with disabilities, brings awareness to employment issues and inclusive hiring practices, and reminds employers of the importance and value of an inclusive workforce. The theme for NDEAM 2022 is "Disability: Part of the Equity Equation."



In Missouri, the month of October is also recognized as Disability History Month to educate and raise awareness about the valuable contributions of people with disabilities and the proud heritage of disability history. Governor Michael L. Parson has issued two proclamations, designating October as [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) and [Disability History Month](#) in Missouri.

The Governor's Council on Disability recognizes and celebrates NDEAM by raising awareness about employment inclusion through its annual [Disability Employment Awareness Month poster contest](#) and hosting a [Virtual NDEAM Exhibit](#) on the Disability Web Portal. The exhibit provides information about the background and history of NDEAM, disability history, ideas to celebrate, employment resources for Missourians with disabilities, and other resources.



The winner of the 2022 poster contest is Robert Campbell from Forsyth, Missouri, who states that the motivation behind his artwork is showing "My hands that are able and ready to service my community and my fellow man. My hands are capable of performing work and making a difference in my life and the lives of others. My volunteer work for non-profit charities fulfill a need in my life to be productive and contributing to society. It provides significance!"

What can you do to celebrate NDEAM?

Visit the NDEAM virtual exhibit page on the Disability Portal <https://disability.mo.gov/NDEAM.htm>

Check out 31 Days of NDEAM for additional ideas <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam/ideas>

EXTRAORDINARY SESSION SERVES AS A REMINDER

by Laura Mueth

As you may be aware, in September the General Assembly convened in an Extraordinary Session more commonly known as a Special Session. The purpose was to address issues related to agriculture tax credits and income taxes. While these topics are not specifically targeted at assisting individuals with disabilities, Governor Parson [calling an Extraordinary Session](#) serves as a reminder that legislators work all year on issues: whether it be in a formal or non-formal setting.

Two House of Representatives committees also held hearings prior to the start of the Extraordinary Session. One included an update on the status of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities who are currently boarding in hospitals because, despite efforts of the Missouri Department of Mental Health Division of Developmental Disabilities and residential providers, a residential provider placement which meets the needs of these individuals is not able to be found due to staffing issues.

To assist legislators in hearing about these and other types of issues impacting the lives of Missouri residents with disabilities, the GCD conducts an annual [Legislative Priorities Poll](#). The results are shared with our state legislators.



If you have not already completed this year's Legislative Priorities Poll, you still have time to do so as it continues to be open until 5:00 p.m. Friday, November 4, 2022. Go to https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative_priorities_poll.htm or <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WF5Z355> to participate in the poll.

GEARING UP FOR 2023 YOUTH LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

by Rachel Rackers



The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) planning committee is already gearing up for the 2023 MO-YLF, which will be held July 18th-22nd at the University of Missouri Columbia campus.

Each year, MO-YLF provides high school students with disabilities a week-long college setting experience, where they learn about disability history, advocacy, the legislative process, transition to employment or higher education, adaptive technology and adaptive sports.

It is important for students with disabilities to learn skills by example and interactions with others who share similar experiences, which is what MO-YLF provides. The program is designed specifically to help students grow into leaders. Students are selected to become delegates at the forum based on an application process. In addition to leadership skills, the delegates learn to set life goals, advocate for their needs, and give back to the community.

Applications for staff, volunteers and delegates will be available on our website by mid-October. The deadline for delegate applications is April 15th and staff applications are due May 1st.

The MO-YLF planning committee encourages you to spread the word about MO-YLF and to come experience this life-changing week!

For more information and the online application, please visit <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylyf.htm>

The Governor's Council on Disability will be hosting its 3rd Annual [Virtual Leadership Summit](#) on March 4, 2023!



The Virtual Leadership Summit (VLS) is a one-day leadership training for high school students with disabilities, ages 16–21. It's hosted by the Governor's Council on Disability, Vocational Rehabilitation, MU Pre-Employment Transition Services, and Paraquad.

Participants will meet virtually with leaders in the disability community and hear from employers, mentors, alumni, and keynote speakers about the importance of goal setting, self-advocacy, leadership and independent living. It's also a chance for students to get a glimpse of our five-day program, the annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, which is held at the University of Missouri campus in Columbia.

The event is open to transition age high school students and must be a Missouri resident to qualify. For more information or to apply, visit our website <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm>. Applications will open in October.

Please help us share both of these exciting leadership training opportunities with students, parents, teachers and colleagues!

WEB ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS AND TRAINING IMPROVES OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Article by Lainie Strange, Office of Administration, Information Technology Services Division

In our day-to-day work, nobody purposely excludes people, especially those with disabilities. Many times, people just fail to see the connection between accessibility and immediate goals, commitments, or priorities. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 26 percent of adults in the U.S. have a disability. In Missouri, this number increases to 28.4 percent (1.4 million adults).



According to 2017 research by the [Federal government's Section 508 Governance Committee](#), 71 percent of users with a disability will immediately leave a website that is not accessible. In a dominant self-service world, these barriers result in citizens going without needed services or losing independence due to reliance on others.

What are the results of web accessibility awareness and education? When accessibility awareness and education permeates the organization's culture, it creates a shared responsibility and understanding as well as a perception of being transparent and fair. Accessibility results in wider audience reach to information and services, improves search engine ranking, creates a more trusted brand and avoids lawsuits and complaints. An added benefit is that improvements aimed at accommodating disabled users actually improve the overall user experience.

What can we do as citizens of Missouri? Develop empathy through web accessibility awareness as well as develop skills in creating accessible content and documents.

Web Accessibility Training Recommendations:

LinkedIn Learning ([free access from many libraries](#), contact your local library)

- [Web Accessibility Awareness Training](#) (50 minutes)
- [Document Accessibility 101 Training](#) (5.5 hours—Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, Creating an Accessible PDF)

Missouri Assistive Technology

- [ICT & Accessible Documents Training YouTube Channel](#)

AT3 Center

- [ICT Accessibility Training YouTube Channel](#)



Visit the State of Missouri web accessibility resource page for more information at <https://at.mo.gov/it-access/>

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HIGHLIGHTING BEST PRACTICES IN INCLUSION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

by Claudia Browner

Diversity and Inclusion efforts are increasingly becoming a priority for employers, organizations and agencies. It is critical that disability is seen as an aspect of diversity, and that the perspectives and voices of people with disabilities are valued in order to provide a more accessible, inclusive and diverse work environment and customer experience.

To help raise awareness about the importance of disability inclusion, the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) invites you to highlight and recognize best practices in inclusion by submitting a nomination for the annual Inclusion Award.

Likewise, if you encounter a young individual with disabilities who serves as a leader and change maker in their communities, the GCD invites you to nominate them for the Youth Leadership Award.

Let's celebrate the strides being made by those who truly embrace inclusion and youth leadership. Visit the websites below to find out more about the GCD awards programs.

Nominations for the 2022 [Inclusion Award](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm) can be submitted at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm>

The 2022 [Youth Leadership Award](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm) nominations can be submitted at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **October 5-7, 2022**
MACDDS Annual Conference, Columbia
<https://macdds.org/2022-macdds-annual-conference/>
- **October 25-26, 2022**
Equity Summit, Dept. of Higher Education & Workforce Development, virtual
<https://eduvents.dhewd.mo.gov/>

If you know of other events you would like us to share with the disability community, please contact our office.

Nominate online by January 31 or postmarked 1/31/23

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM

Recognizing Leaders in Inclusion and Youth Leadership

Questions? Call 573.751.2600

Inclusion Award
<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm>

Youth Leadership Award
<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm>



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



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SEASONS GREETINGS

by Claudia Browner

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- Disability Benefits 101 Online Tool
- Upcoming Events



The GCD team is extending best wishes for the upcoming holidays to our readers, colleagues, and friends. We wish you a peaceful and joyful Christmas, happy holidays, and happy and healthy New Year!

For many people, the end of the year is a time to reflect on the events, challenges, and accomplishments of the year and set goals for the new year that lies ahead. I am grateful that the GCD was able to host the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) again in 2022, after a two year break due to the pandemic. It is a life-changing, rewarding program, and I invite you to read more about the outcomes of the MO-YLF on page 4. I am thankful for the partnerships and collaborations with other state agencies and disability organizations to continue our work of promoting inclusion and accessibility for the disability community.



I am also grateful for our new team member Jennifer Pettit, who joined the GCD as our lead administrative assistant in August. Jenn celebrates 20 years of service to the State of Missouri in December and we are very happy to have her on our team! Congratulations, Jenn!

For the upcoming year, I am excited and looking forward to some new opportunities and continuing programs. Read on page 2 about the new Legislative Education Project webinars the GCD will be offering during the upcoming legislative session, and find out about the opportunities for Missouri high school students with disabilities on page 3.

SUBMIT NOMINATIONS NOW FOR LEADERS IN INCLUSION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

As we close out the year 2022, I would like to remind you that the GCD needs your help in recognizing Missouri's leaders in Inclusion and Youth Leadership. The GCD is now accepting nominations to award individuals, organizations, employers, or agencies for their work in including people with disabilities in all aspects of life, and for young leaders who are making a difference in their communities.

Nominations for the 2022 [Inclusion Award](#) and [Youth Leadership Award](#) can be submitted online now until January 31.

The awards will be presented at the Power Up Assistive Technology Conference and Expo in April 2023.

2022 INCLUSION & YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDS

31st Annual Inclusion Award

The Governor's Council on Disability is seeking nominations to recognize a Missouri resident, organization, agency or business that has demonstrated excellence in leadership for best practices in inclusion of people with disabilities!

Submit your nominations now for the 2022 awards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT A NOMINATION, PLEASE VISIT:

<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm>

10th Annual Youth Leadership Award

The Governor's Council on Disability is seeking nominations for outstanding Missouri youths (ages 16-26) with a disability who are GREAT leaders and make a difference in their communities. Who are the leaders you know?

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT A NOMINATION, PLEASE VISIT:

<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm>

LEARNING ABOUT THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN MISSOURI

by Laura Mueth

The Governor's Council on Disability will be offering five webinars for the 2023 [Legislative Education Project](#) (LEP) during the upcoming legislative session. The purpose of the LEP is to educate and motivate individuals by providing opportunities to become more active in creating positive public policies for people with disabilities.



The LEP webinars are open to individuals or organizations that are new to the legislative process, or those who need additional information about disability policies or proposed legislation that impact people with disabilities.

Each webinar will include information on the legislative process, communicating with legislators, and current state bills related to disability. Webinars will be offered on the following dates:

- Monday, January 9, 2023 10:00 AM
- Monday, January 9, 2023 2:00 PM
- Wednesday, February 1, 2023 7:00 PM
- Thursday, March 16, 2023 10:00 AM
- Thursday, March 16, 2023 7:00 PM

The webinars will be provided at no cost to participants. WebEx software will be used to conduct each webinar. Registration is required to attend. Please complete the [LEP Registration Form](#). If accommodations are needed, please register at least two weeks prior to the webinar date so accommodations can be arranged in a timely matter.

For more information about the LEP, please visit the [LEP web page](#) at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/LEP.htm>

2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES POLL RESULTS

by Laura Mueth

The 2022 Legislative Priorities Poll (Poll) results are now available. Four hundred fifty-two people completed the Poll. The 2023 legislative priorities for the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) will be:

1. Plans for public emergencies and disasters ensuring needs of people with disabilities are met
2. All public buildings having evacuation plans for all people with disabilities
3. Updating State of Missouri websites to include more language that is direct and easy to understand for those with reading or writing difficulties.
4. The Direct Support Professional workforce providing critical services
5. Ban on drivers' texting while driving

These were the Poll questions which received the highest combined strongly agree and agree response percentages.

A report showing the results for all of the questions asked has been posted on the [Annual Legislative Priorities Poll page](#).

It will be shared with all representatives and senators in January once the 102nd General Assembly begins. It will also be sent to state elected officials at that time. All of these individuals will receive the responses to the Poll's open answer questions.

The GCD Council members and staff appreciate everyone's participation.



DATES SET FOR 3RD ANNUAL VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT—APPLY Now!

by Rachel Rackers



The Governor's Council on Disability and its partnering agencies will be hosting its 3rd Annual [Virtual Leadership Summit](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm) on March 4, 2023!

Missouri high school students with disabilities (16-21 years old) will have the opportunity to meet virtually with leaders in the disability community and hear from mentors, alumni, and keynote speakers about the importance of goal setting, self-advocacy, and leadership and independent living. It's also a chance for students to get a glimpse of our five-day program, the annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, which is held at the University of Missouri campus in Columbia.

Applications are available on our website now until January 15th. The Virtual Leadership Summit is free to program participants. Apply now and get more information at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm>

APPLY NOW FOR THE 2023 MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

by Rachel Rackers

The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm) (MO-YLF) planning committee is already gearing up for the 2023 MO-YLF, which will be held July 18–22 at the University of Missouri, Columbia campus.

Each year, the MO-YLF provides high school students with disabilities (ages 16-21) a week-long college setting experience, where they learn about disability history, advocacy, the legislative process, transition to employment or higher education, adaptive technology and adaptive sports. It is important for students with disabilities to learn skills by example and interactions with others who share similar experiences, which is what MO-YLF provides. In addition to leadership skills, the student delegates learn to set life goals, advocate for their needs, and give back to their community.

Applications for delegates, staff, and volunteers are now available on our website.

There is no cost for accepted delegates to attend the program. The program is funded through sponsorships and donations.

The application deadlines are April 15, 2023 for delegates and May 1, 2023 for staff.

A promotional graphic for the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum 2023. It features the forum's logo at the top, followed by the dates "JULY 18-22, 2023" and the text "Apply Today!". Below this, it describes the program as a "A unique career leadership training program for high school students with disabilities, ages 16-21." and emphasizes "AND IT'S FREE!" with arrows. At the bottom, there is a group photo of participants and the website "https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm", the phone number "573-751-2600", and the deadline "APPLY BY APRIL 15, 2023".

MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM
JULY 18-22, 2023
Apply Today!
A unique career leadership training program for high school students with disabilities, ages 16-21.
—▶ **AND IT'S FREE!** ◀—

<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm>
573-751-2600
APPLY BY APRIL 15, 2023

For more information or to apply, visit <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm>. If you have any questions about the GCD's youth programs, please contact Rachel Rackers at rachel.rackers@oa.mo.gov or 573-751-2600.

Please help us share both of these exciting leadership training opportunities with students, parents, teachers and colleagues!

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES OF MO-YLF ALUMNI

by Rachel Rackers



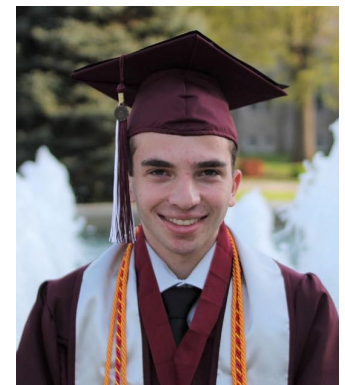
One of the pleasures that comes from being involved with the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is getting to see alumni take leadership skills and self-determination away the Forum, and seeing how they use these skills to continue their growth and get involved in their community.

We would like to recognize some of the alumni's recent achievements:

- * Abby Bax (2022 alum) was one of only seven swimmers in Missouri to qualify for the USA games in Orlando, Florida. She competed in three events, and came home with two medals. Recently, Abby was named as a Special Olympics Player of the Year.
- * Craig Aslin (2006 alum) now works for the State of Missouri as a disability determination counselor in St. Louis.
- * Jonathan Thornburgh (2019 alum) graduated from Missouri State University's Bear Power program in May and recently got his first car
- * Izzy Collins (2019 alum) is attending college at SEMO in Cape Girardeau and has recently become a member of a sorority
- * Luke Friedel (2022 alum) is in the UMSL Succeed program and has his own radio show segment called "Luke-ing Back" on the UMSL radio station
- * Piper Earhart (2019 alum) recently won a gold medal in a Special Olympics bowling tournament

As you can imagine, it can sometimes be difficult to keep up with the latest accomplishments from all 359 alumni that have gone through the program since 2001. To hopefully make it easier to learn and recognize the achievements of more alumni, we are in the process of creating a short online form to be posted on the GCD website. If you are a MO-YLF alum, we would love to hear from you and learn what you have been up to. It is important for all alumni to remember that their accomplishments not only have an impact in their own lives, but for other individuals that have disabilities. As they are leading by example, they are making a difference and encouraging others to see their own potential, whether they realize it or not.

Keep up the great work, alumni! We are very proud of your accomplishments.



Pictured above are (from left to right): Abby Bax, Piper Earhart, Izzy Collins, and Jonathan Thornburgh

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Council Members

- Ronald Hack, Council Chair, St. Louis
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D, Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Wayne Crawford, Marshall
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Kim Lackey, St. Louis
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Traci Ritter, Cape Girardeau
- Andrew Sartorius, Jefferson City
- Lesia Shelton, Buffalo
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Staff Members

- Claudia Browner, Executive Director
- Laura Mueth, Senior Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Senior Program Specialist
- Jennifer Pettit, Lead Administrative Support Assistant

DISABILITY BENEFITS 101 ONLINE TOOL

Information provided by the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council



The Disability Benefits 101 (DB101) online tool assists people with disabilities, and their circles of support, in making informed employment decisions.

DB101 is a comprehensive, state-specific online digital resource that

helps people with disabilities to make informed decisions about employment. With the redesigned site, users in Missouri will find a modern design that is mobile-friendly and easier to navigate. The enhanced site features:

- 24/7 Access to Interactive, Self-Directed Planning Tools
- Real-Time Support
- Personalized Results - Just for You

The accessibility enhancements ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) can calculate their information on their own, or with the help of a benefit counselor. The tool generates a report that illustrates future earnings and how benefits change over time.

Get started at [MO.DB101.org](https://mo.db101.org)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **March 1, 2023**
Disability Rights Legislative Day, State Capitol, Jefferson City and virtual
<https://drld.org>
- **March 4, 2023**
Virtual Leadership Summit
<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm>
- **April 3-4, 2023**
Power Up Assistive Technology Conference & Expo, Columbia
<https://at.mo.gov/power-up-conference/>
- **May 2-4, 2023**
Annual Charting the LifeCourse Showcase, Kansas City
<https://www.lifecoursetools.com/events/showcase-2023>
- **July 18-22, 2023**
Missouri Youth Leadership Forum
<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm>

If you know of other events you would like us to share with the disability community, please contact our office.